

May 8 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

said, "Michael was my rock." Well, that's fine. And the LAPD have many, many such rocks, people doing a job and doing it well. And you were rocks, saving buildings and saving lives. These pictures that I was handed, I mean, I'll tell you, they make a profound impression on—I'm sure they make an impression on firefighters, but they make a profound impression on the layman to think about battling something this powerful and doing it with the heroism and the dedication you do.

So, really, what I wanted to do is drop in here, trying to do it just as President of the United States, trying to leave the politics back there somewhere on the Potomac and come out here to see what I could see with my eyes and to give my heartfelt

thanks to those—in this instance, highway patrolmen, firefighters—who have done so much for their country.

So that's my message, and it's a profound one in a sense that today and yesterday it was the riots in Los Angeles, tomorrow it'll be something else. And over the last years it's always been the same, the dedication, the selfless dedication. I don't want to think any of you guys would say you're overpaid, but you're doing something for your fellow man, and that in itself means an awful lot to your country.

So thank you, and may God bless you.

*Note: The President spoke at 7:51 a.m. at Fire Station No. 26.*

## Remarks to Military and Law Enforcement Personnel in Los Angeles

May 8, 1992

Thank you all. Thank you very, very much, and I'm just delighted to be here. I first would salute all that participated in keeping the peace, guaranteeing the peace, fighting against those who wanted to break the peace. And the events of the past 10 days, not just for the people in Los Angeles but people in the rest of the country, have been packed with emotion, raw and intense.

And in my time out here I've heard the shouts of anger and heard some whispered prayers yesterday in a lovely ecumenical church service. We've seen utter devastation, all of you have that have looked around the streets at all. We've seen the beginnings of restoration. And we've seen the worst that human beings can do, and then we've seen some of the very best.

So, I really wanted to come over here and thank all of you, the LAPD, the members of the military, the Guard and the regulars, both Marine—[*applause*]. And I think what this particular group and others that I just met with, the highway patrolmen, firefighters, are saying to the country is that we stand to defend decency and honor; we stand to defend and protect the honest men

and women in this country. And that's the message that I think has gone out. And you did what's right, and you did what's demanded of you.

And yesterday in this little church service I mentioned, I mentioned the police officers particularly, singled them out, and the place broke into spontaneous applause for those officers that are out there bringing civil tranquility to this country. And I salute—[*applause*]. And then I want to single out and salute also the Federal law enforcement officers who worked side by side with many of you who were on the streets. The special agents from the FBI, the Bureau of Prisons people, the marshals, the Border Patrol, all were out there assisting the police in stopping the terrible violence and the looting. And of course, again, the local police officials, the LAPD, the officers on the beat who have the toughest job in the world. And I came, really, just to thank each and every one of you who worked around the clock to restore order.

I might say, I've just come from the hospital where I saw a young firefighter who

was wantonly shot in the head. He's driving his fire truck, hook and ladder truck, to put out a fire, and some hoodlum comes alongside and shoots him. He's fighting right this minute for his very life. But it makes me grateful as a citizen of this country that you have courageous people like that willing to undergo the trauma that he is facing right now. So we can all maybe say a prayer for Scott and just hope that he makes it.

The men and women of the Armed Forces were out minding your own business when the call came. But I really believe this: that when it became clear—and I've talked to the Governor who's with me here today about it, talked to the Mayor of this city—but when it became clear that not only the Guard but the regulars were willing to respond and would be there, I think the very fact that the military was here, prepared to do what was necessary, served as an enormously inhibiting factor from those hoodlums that wanted to disrupt the civil tranquility of Los Angeles, indeed, of our country.

So, once again, I salute you for that. And even more fundamentally, I salute all of you who serve in uniform of the military for the United States of America. You have our profound thanks and gratitude.

I will do my level-best as President to work to help solve the problems in the communities. I pledge that. I'm going to go back to Washington; have more to say about that next week. But I'll tell you this: I will remain the President who strongly supports the law enforcement community in this country and who strongly supports our military. Without you, we would not enjoy the peace and tranquility that a lot of the rest of the country is enjoying right now. So thank you very much to each and every one of you who participated in any way in helping this great city of Los Angeles.

And the last point is this: I went around to a lot of the communities. And I have a genuine feeling in my heart that Los Angeles is going to bounce right on back and be this great city that it's always been.

So may God bless everybody here from Los Angeles, and my profound thanks to the rest of you. God bless you all. Thank you so very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 8:22 a.m. at the Los Angeles Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to Scott Miller, a Los Angeles firefighter who was injured during the disturbances.*

## Remarks to Community Leaders in Los Angeles May 8, 1992

I would get off to a bad start if I didn't say what I think everybody else is feeling, and I want to just congratulate Larisse for that marvelous rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

And may I first thank all of you for being here today. I think they were introduced at the very beginning, but I want to single out two members of my Cabinet, Secretary Lou Sullivan of HHS and Secretary Jack Kemp from Housing and Urban Development who are here with me. We've really had a good tour. I want to salute Senator Seymour, Governor Wilson, who's been at my side, both of them, as we've made this tour through the city. Pat Saiki of SBA, the

Administrator of the Small Business Administration, came out early, and she is on the ground and doing a first-class job. And of course, I would like to also salute Mayor Tom Bradley who has been so extraordinarily helpful on this visit. And I'm not going to forget the inspirational leader of the Challenger, Lou Dantzler.

I would also say to the city officials that I can just imagine, given what you all have been through, the headache that this visit has caused. And I promise you we plan to leave right on schedule so things can get back to normal. But I want to thank everybody involved in facilitating this visit that came, I'm sure, at a very complicated time